2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

j. Concerning fever and illness.

757 When husband or wife or the children get fever, they let some one feel the hand (pulse). When he has done this, he says: He is all right; let some medicine be crushed for the ill one, he will get well. Then they say to him: Do, Sir, please you give him medicine. He will then go to the forest, dig up and bring medicine; when he has done this, he pounds it for the patient; the juice he squeezes out into a leaf-cup; he then makes him drink it. He does this for him some three or four days. If the patient does not get well by this, the medicine giver says: By this all people recover; how is it that this one is not recovering; let the reason for this be found out from some one.

755 Then they get hold of an ojha. He makes divination. The person who wants divination to be made goes to an ojha with oil and Sal-leaves, hands these over to him and says to him: Please, Father, look into these leaves and this oil of mine. The ojha asks him: Who of you is ill? He says: My wife, or my child (as the case may be). The ojha says: What is your name? He tells him this. The ojha then asks him about his village. Having got the name of the village he pours some oil out on one leaf; thereupon he sprinkles the oil on the leaf three times on the ground, naming his patron godling. He then presses a leaf down on the leaf with oil, covering it, and he rubs it, pronouncing an incantation. Thereupon he puts it for a short while down on the ground. Having taken it up from the ground he salutes it, and separating the leaves he looks at it. The person who has caused the divination to be made, asks the ojha: What do you see, Father, disease or a bonga or people? The ojha answers him: So and so bonga of yours is feeling hungry, and some spell of an evil eye is also there. Ojhas will not at once mention witches. If two or three ojhas, of different villages, say the same, then the person believes it and having reached home he pours out water as a libation to the bongs they have named, and says: May he (she) recover; when he (she) has recovered, I shall fill thee, give thee as much as thou canst take.

Thereupon he takes hold of the ojha of the village. He makes divination to catch the bongas of the outskirts. He then says: The evil-eye-bonga is so and so. The man who causes the divination to be made says: Please reconcile him. Now the ojha asks for a little sun-dried rice. He gets this in a leaf. The ojha then makes the patient touch this rice with his left hand, and he exorcises him (her) with the rice. Thereupon he goes to the end of the homestead field and prickles himself with a thorn in five places on his thigh; he smears the blood on the rice; thereupon he kneads and mixes the blood-smeared rice with the rice in the leaf. Thereupon he sows this out with his left hand to the bonga who has been caught. He now makes an invocation: Beware then, thou so and so, in so and so headman's house thou applied thyself, knocked thyself; to-day I caught thee, grasped thee with my hand like a fish, like a crab; from to-day mayest thou forswear,

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258 through the vertical post at the other end. Then they press together the two logs by placing another solid piece of wood crosswise over the upper log parallel to the wooden cleat which is fitted in the vertical post. With the help of these two, the logs are pressed together. Now-a-days the Santals supply the seeds and fruits to the Toli (oil men) and get oil in return. Besides using this oil for curry preparation they use oil in anointing, lubricating, for medicinal purposes and for lighting lamps.

[178] [252] [302] [757] [372]

How the Santals Prepare Pachawa (rice beer) :- The Santals drink Handi in large quantities. Young boys and girls, old men and women all drink Handi. Their method of preparing (rice beer) handi is as follows :- The first thing is to make a pot, with a large mouth called *tukuc*. The *tukuc* is filled with dry leaves or straw and set on the fire, they do it outside the house in the open as there is much smoke. This is done in the morning when they are to start brewing. When the *tukuc* becomes cool, it is cleaned. Then in the afternoon, they take ordinary rice and roast this a little. The roasting is said to give a certain flavour to the beer. Thereupon the rice is boiled and after that spread out to dry. The quantity of rice used for one brew varies from four to six paos (one pao is quarter of a seer). When the rice is fairly dry it is mixed with some vegetable fermenting stuff called Bakhar.[1] Very often certain vegetable matter is added to the Bakhar to make the beer intoxicating. When the rice and

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1. Bakhar is a small round white thing which the Santals buy in the market. It is prepared by mixing hundred kinds of roots of trees and creepers with the powder of rice.

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(a) Raranic or Herb-Doctor.

In his individual ailments the Santal recognises the disease to be due to either of the three causes as mentioned by Dr. Clements,[1] such as :

1. Natural causes,
2. Human agencies,
3. Supernatural agencies,

Naturally different functionaries are called upon to remedy the different items.

The man called upon to treat the diseases due to natural cause is the Raranic who comes nearest to our modern practising physician. He is a master of many herbs and simples. Like the modern physician he has faith in his drugs and herbs and looks askance on the practices of the spirit doctor or Ojha and his hocus-pocus. He learns his trade as an apprentice to an old practising Raranic who jealously guards the secrets of his herbs and prescriptions. They say that their knowledge is derived mostly by observation of animals attacked with disease and the way these cure themselves. He follows the diseased animal in the jungle and marks the herbs or roots From the encyclopaedic list of prescriptions collected by Rev. P.O. Bodding and Mrs. Bodding, M.B., one would infer that the Santal medical treatment has not been entirely conservative. There are indeed several items which could be taken as survival of primitive prescriptions such as the use of animal refuse or insect preparation, reminding us of the cauldron of Macbeth's witches.

[1]Forrest E. Clement's Primitive Concepts of Disease. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, p. 186, Volume 32, No. 2, pp. 185, 252, year 1932.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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witches. But the majority comprises of herbs and sometimes also minerals, leading one to suspect strongly the influence of Hindu indigeneous Kaviraji treatment which had been universally adopted (ancient Hindu medicinal treatises having been translated into Arabic and passed through it into mediaeval European pharmacopoeia). Thus for instance the use of Rasa-Sindur is distinctly Hindu, the word Rasa being the old Hindu word for a form of preparation of mercury. Similarly, some names such as Kababchini or tobacco-water show post-Mahomedan adoption.

It may be mentioned here that there is a seasonal ceremonial called Ranjagao for the vitalising or blessing of medicinal plants in general, at the time of the autumnal Dasai parab. This has no reference to any special ingredients but increases the effectiveness of medicine in general. There are certain instructions given as to the time and mode.

The method of diagnosis, generally followed, is by feeling the pulse as amongst the Hindu Kavirajes.

(b) **Tejo Theory**

The Santal calls in the Rarantic for diseases due to natural causes. But he also has a theory of disease which in his scientific viewpoint is as natural a cause as infection caused by bacteria. But we can look upon it as an agency which is natural and yet supernatural and sometimes also diffused with human agency. According to them diseases would be caused by a tejo which may be large or very miscroscopic. These tejos are located in different parts of the body, some at the root of the nose and some in different parts of the body.

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756 work. The *ojha* also professes to know how to find out and deal with the possible supernatural powers at work.

755 The *ojha* first feels the pulse,[1] sees the tongue of the
756 patient and after having diagnosed the case he tries to drive away the complaint by uttering magical formulas or singing *jharuis* songs over the patient. These mantras and *jharuis* differ in every disease.[2] After uttering the mantras the ojha blows over the patient commencing at the head and finishing downwards and towards the back. When the *mantras*[3] or *jharuis* or both have no effect, as they naturally never have in cases of disease, the next thing the *ojha* will do is to call for Sal leaves and a little mustard oil (which the Santals call Sunumbonga, lit. oil offering). With these he verifies the correctness of his diagnosis arrived at by feeling the pulse and seeing the tongue, etc. Having done this he then gives necessary instructions as regards food and treatment and himself brings or orders the ingredients wanted for
756 the medicine to be given. The *ojha* is very particular
• 757 not to divulge the secrets of his profession. Once in the Sundar Pahar village within Godda Damin in Santal Parganas a little boy was ill. The *ojha* of that village was called by the father of that boy to see and give him necessary medicine. He brought the root of a tree from the jungle and gave the boy the juice of that root as a cure. I asked the *ojha* the name of

[1]According to their idea if the pulse comes towards the thumb or index-finger it is a sign that orak bongas (house bongas) are hungry. If the pulse comes towards the middle finger the abge bongas (tutelary bongas) are hungry, if towards the ring or little finger a bonga of the field or outskirts is at work.

[2]Rev. P. O. Bodding, op. cit., pp. 1-32.

3 [Erratum: this should read "Mantras." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x - Analyst]

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I asked the ojha the name of the tree but he never divulged the name of the ingredients of his medicines to me inspite of my repeated request. If the patient is not cured they call in some other more competent *ojha* from another distant village. Sometimes the *ojha* takes other means to detect the disease and the name of the *bonga* who is making the mischief. This the *ojha* does by means of a twig of Sirom broom and drawing certain squares on the earth. (This is called "Tarik" by the Santal).

The *ojha* adopts the following methods to cure the disease of the patient :

(1) *Adwa Chawla* and Bul mayam.

(2) Disease localised at one point of the body and the evil cured by biting and sucking, i.e., by sucking out the intruding disease object.

(3) *Bongas* removed by digging.

(4) *Bongas* exorcised.

(5) Medicine administered.

How a Santal becomes an *ojha* : The method of initiation :

Among the Santals two kinds of *ojhas* can be seen : those who learn for pleasure's sake and those who learn seriously and earnestly. In the case of the first no initiations are required after the learning is over, whereas in the second, initiation is the essential part of the learning. To become an *ojha* (both professional and amateur) one has to be a disciple under an expert *ojha*. The first course commences in the middle of Jaishtha (May and June), their first sitting being on a Sunday or in some cases on a Friday. Every day they come to the house of the guru after taking their meals. They take their seat in the courtyard of the guru's house. In the

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The Santals have many things of value in their culture. There are many elements that are well worth preservation and which have a great deal to teach the so called civilized neighbours. 177

The Santals have a large number of folklores and folk songs which contain many new ideas and thoughts. Their art of recreation brings a balance in their life which is lamentably absent in the civilized neighbours. 588

The political organisation of the Santals is worth studying. Although they have neither studied any literature on this line nor they have any written constitution yet they are extremely disciplined people and are managing their tribal affairs in a highly democratic way. The communal life of the Santal is well organised, in which everything is shared even joy and sorrow of one is the joy and sorrow of the whole community. This virtue is lacking in the so called civilized society where life is individualistic and so we find more selfishness in civilized people. 66 62 184

The knowledge of herbs and medicines of the Santal medicine-men is highly developed. Rev. P.O. Bodding with the help of two qualified doctors, Mrs. Bodding M.B. & Ch.B. (Edin) and Dr. B.B. Bogh, collected a large number of plants and other stuff used by the Santal medicine-men. He published the names of the plants and other stuff, the list of prescriptions and veterinary medicines in the memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in two parts.[1] Rev. Bodding men- 278 756 757 278 757 278

1. P.O. Bodding—Studies in Santal Medicine and connected folklore—Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Calcutta) Vol. X No. I p. 1-132 and No. II p. 133-426 (1927).

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757 278 tioned in his introductory remarks the following, "When in January 1890 he came out to the Santals, he was from the very first brought into contact with their medicine. It did not take long to be made aware of the Santals having medical treatment and medicines of their own, and of their belief in this. They might doubt the efficacy of certain medicine; but many were affirmed to be proved, as they called it.

It was not seldom to hear them profess to be able to cure what European doctors consider hopeless. In some cases (not hopeless ones) that came to the writer's notice is also seemed to be a fact that they had applied remedies of an efficacious nature. There is just the possibility that among the many ingredients used by them some few might be found that are not known to western science as medicines".

278 If these medicinal ingredients be scientifically analysed and tested, something of value might be found and thereby the modern medical science may be benefited.

157 Above all the Santals are well known for their simplicity, honesty, straightforwardness, frankness and sincerity in thought and action. It is regrettable that [178] these virtues of the Santals are gradually disappearing as a result of unregulated cultural change.

177 Thus from the above it appears that Hinduism has not brought any appreciable change in the Santal culture. Except the introduction of a few Hindu gods and goddesses no other change can be found in the Santal religion. In social sphere there is no effect. In material culture some minor changes have taken

5: Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

wait for men. Women are protected from the designs of these ghosts by the iron bangle which they wear.

Ghosts of the dead and other private spirits who are given the title of *boṅga* form part of the stock-in-trade of the two classes of people among the Santals who deal regularly with the occult- the magicians and the witches. They are bitterly opposed to each other's influence, and they clash for the most part on the battleground of sickness and disease. An exhaustive treatise on the Santal attitude to disease has been published, and shows conclusively that, as with ghosts so with sickness, the ideas of the Santals are common to all the lower strata of society in North India.[1] These ideas are not simple but complex, and range from the realm of the rational to the fantastic. Disease is sometimes ascribed to natural causes, particularly when the chain of causation is fairly obvious and can be repeated in a series of experiments; there is a whole class of food described as *batol*, which means that it is unwholesome. There are hundreds of remedies that require no supernatural aid to make them effective. Some remedies are the property of all, while others are the property of individuals and the knowledge of their ingredients is a closely guarded secret. Chaitan of Churimara began his career as a physician in response to a specific need. When he was a young man a friend had come to him in great distress and said that his boy was vomiting blood. He turned to Chaitan and asked him if he knew of any medicine that would be good for the boy. Chaitan was so sorry for his friend that he promised to do something, although when he said this he had no notion what he should do. As he was setting out for his friend's house he prayed to *Cando* and asked that he might be shown what he ought to do; at the same time he shut his eyes and kicked at the soil. As he opened his eyes again he saw a plant, which he immediately dug up. He ground the roots to make a medicine, and the boy recovered from his sickness. Since then he has applied the same remedy to many other cases. One of his patients had been extremely ill, he said, but was now the father of four or five children! He has been in great demand as a physician, and claims that *Cando* subsequently revealed many remedies to him. Sometimes it is claimed that remedies are made known in dreams. The plant that was first revealed to Chaitan was the *upel tandi* plant, which has a red flower.

[1] P. O. Bedding, *Studies in Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore, Memoirs of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. X.